

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 13, 2017

The Honorable Ben Carson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Carson:

We are writing to you to express our concerns about current U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) policies and priorities regarding homelessness assistance. It has come to our attention that HUD's current procedures in administering such assistance have put homeless families, youth, and children at risk, in addition to jeopardizing holistic-based programs that work to alleviate the effects of poverty by supporting sobriety, work, and accountability.

As you know, in recent competitions for the Continuum of Care program, one of the program priorities articulated by HUD has been the "Housing First" approach, which focuses on providing immediate access to housing, prioritizing providers that offer services to clients on a voluntary basis, rather than those programs that require sobriety or participation in education, work, training, or service programs. Under this policy, HUD now gives considerable preference based on a program's commitment to using the Housing First model, placing programs that do not use that model at a severe disadvantage in receiving financial assistance.

By implementing its preference for the Housing First model, HUD has removed any incentive for independent housing programs to operate under a model that includes mandatory services, accountability, or sobriety. In doing this, the Department has effectively used its administrative and regulatory power to impose national priorities on communities, forcing communities and providers to maximize services for certain populations – chronically homeless adults – at the expense of other equally worthy populations – families, youth, and children – and particular program models, regardless of local circumstances, needs, or a program's effectiveness to lift participants out of poverty. Communities as a whole, which benefit from having these programs, are now unfortunately and unfairly penalized by the elimination or decline of such programs.

We strongly urge you to thoroughly review the Department's procedures with respect to providing assistance to programs combatting homelessness and to appropriately exercise your authority in providing support for these types of programs that include families, youth, and children and the community-based program models that serve them well by enabling them to increase their incomes and educational attainment, maintain sobriety, and acquire permanent life skills that will help prevent them from returning to a life of homelessness.

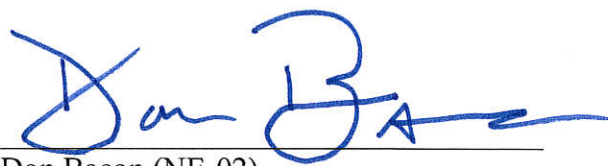
In order to support these families and their children, we also urge you to end the recommended scoring guidelines that currently punish programs that prioritize work, education, and sobriety. We believe that families have the best opportunity to escape dependence on public assistance when they are supported in their recovery and given education, training and work opportunities.

We look forward to working with you to break the intergenerational cycle of family homelessness by promoting programs that serve families and provide safe and drug free housing. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Robert Rische in Congressman Issa's office at (202) 225-3906 or robert.rische@mail.house.gov.

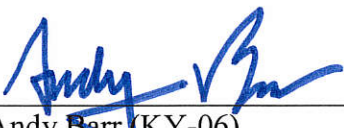
Sincerely,



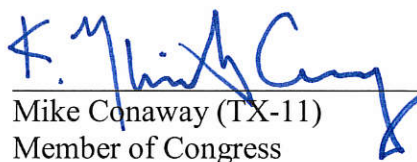
Darrell Issa (CA-49)
Member of Congress



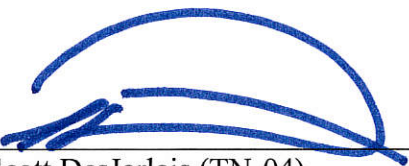
Don Bacon (NE-02)
Member of Congress



Andy Barr (KY-06)
Member of Congress



Mike Conaway (TX-11)
Member of Congress



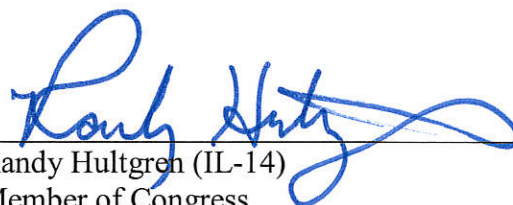
Scott DesJarlais (TN-04)
Member of Congress



Trent Franks (AZ-08)
Member of Congress



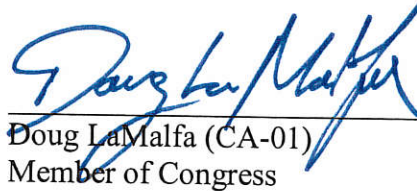
Glenn Grothman (WI-06)
Member of Congress



Randy Hultgren (IL-14)
Member of Congress



Mike Johnson (LA-04)
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)
Member of Congress



Roger Marshall (KS-01)
Member of Congress



Mark Meadows (NC-11)
Member of Congress



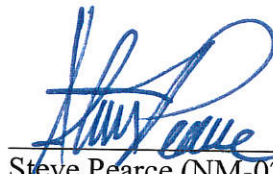
Luke Messer (IN-06)
Member of Congress



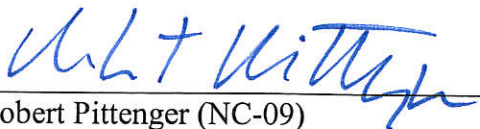
Alex Mooney (WV-02)
Member of Congress



Gary Palmer (AL-06)
Member of Congress



Steve Pearce (NM-02)
Member of Congress



Robert Pittenger (NC-09)
Member of Congress



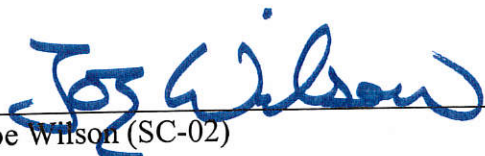
David Rouzer (NC-07)
Member of Congress



Steve Stivers (OH-15)
Member of Congress



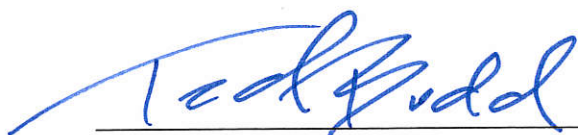
Mark Walker (NC-06)
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "W".

Joe Wilson (SC-02)
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ted Yoho". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "T" and "Y".

Ted Yoho (FL-03)
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ted Budd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "T" and "B".

Ted Budd (NC-13)
Member of Congress